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ABSTRACT

This fastback provides practical information to help teachers better fulfill their roles in the mentoring process. The first section, "Introduction," explains the importance of the mentoring relationship. The second section, "Characteristics of a Good Mentor," highlights four core concepts: a mentor leads through example, a mentor leads through guidance, a mentor leads through communication, and a mentor supports by being an advocate. It notes other attributes of a good mentor, including authenticity, gentleness, patience, consistency, positive attitude, teachability, and enthusiasm. The third section, "Developing a Mentoring Plan," offers a sample public school mentoring plan that includes information on goals, selecting mentor teachers, training, facilitating the mentor program, and a beginning of the school year checklist. A sample university mentoring plan is also included. It focuses on the mentor coordinator, mentors, faculty to be mentored, assigning mentors, symposiums, and suggestions for mentors. The fourth section, "What New Teachers Need," includes the perspectives of two new teachers (one from the public schools and one from the university): "Mentors are Life-Savers for New Teachers" (Jenny Companik) and "Effective Mentors Have a Holistic View" (Brenda Bradshaw). (Contains 20 references.) (SM)

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Teachers Mentoring Teachers

Beth Hurst and Ginny Reding

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Series Editor, Donovan R. Walling

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by
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and
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Introduction

Mentoring has become a buzzword in education. Everyone knows it's the thing to do. But too many of us are not succeeding at it.

Many states now require new teachers to be mentored by veteran teachers. It is important for all teachers to realize their valuable role as mentor to novice teachers, but it is especially vital for those teachers who have been assigned to be a mentor to a new or struggling teacher to understand exactly what their responsibility and role is in the mentoring capacity. The purpose of this fastback is to give practical information, which will help teachers to better fulfill their roles in the mentoring process.

The College of Education of Minnesota State University states very succinctly the purpose of a mentor. A mentor's purpose is "to make the first year one of growth rather than survival."

Too many novice teachers begin their teaching year with enthusiasm, excitement, anticipation, and optimism, only to find frustration and weariness toward the end of the journey. The year becomes one of survival, just trying to make it through.

A good mentor can make an enormous difference in the professional life of a new teacher, perhaps even helping the new teacher to continue in the teaching profession. A mentor provides leadership. A mentor provides the opportunities for questions, perhaps not necessarily answers, but choices that the teacher being mentored can then contemplate, finding his or her own way. A mentor provides communication. A mentor provides collaboration. A mentor is a shoulder, an example, a confidante. A mentor is a friend.

Most people agree that a natural mentor is best. But what if a natural mentor does not appear? Is it true that when the student is ready, the teacher will appear? Does a mentor appear, too? Often, yes, a natural mentor does appear. Usually someone is helping that new person along even when they may not be aware of it.

For example, one new faculty member made the comment at several faculty meetings, "No one mentored me when I came."

The faculty member who had been mentoring that person, but who had not officially been assigned as her mentor, said, "I need to ask you something. Why do you say that no one mentored you? I remember walking with you across campus to get your faculty identification card. I explained to you the university award system and showed you how to apply. You are winning your third award in a row this year. I'm curious why you do not consider that mentoring. And if that is not mentoring, the kind of mentoring you needed, what did you need?"

The new faculty member's reply was sudden. She said, "I never thought of that as mentoring. I just

thought you were being a good friend." A good mentor is a friend.

Every teacher should consider himself or herself a mentor. All of us have someone with whom we are in contact who is learning from us. Conversely, we also should realize that we fall in the category of someone who can be mentored. We are never too successful to learn, never too old to gain new ideas. Mentoring does not have as much to do with the age of a person as it does with the experience and willingness to share.

School systems differ in the ways they handle the mentoring process. Some administrations assign mentors, and there is a structured process of communication and meeting times. In other situations, the process occurs in an almost happenstance way. A novice teacher may be drawn to a more experienced, wiser teacher, who becomes a role model. Unfortunately, in some situations, no one is in place to guide the fledgling teacher through the ins and outs of a new year of students, parents, administrators, and paperwork.

Mentoring takes effort. It takes time. It is an investment. But it also is something that may come naturally to us as teachers. We invest in people, other teachers as well as our students. As Routman states, "Mentoring encompasses coaching, supporting, hand holding, actively listening, gently suggesting, sharing materials, dialoguing with empathy and understanding, and much more" (2000, p. 3). When new teachers receive this kind of help and support, chances are better that they will be more successful, and therefore more content, in their classrooms.

Characteristics of a Good Mentor

By definition, a mentor leads, teaches, and guides. A mentor also supports by serving as an advocate. The mentoring process has at its base a relationship. The stronger the relationship, the more solid the mentoring process will be. The mentoring relationship will work best when the mentor understands his or her role in the relationship. The mentoring role encompasses the following four concepts:

- A mentor leads through example.
- A mentor leads through guidance.
- A mentor leads through communication.
- A mentor supports by being an advocate.

A Mentor Leads Through Example

You may have been assigned to be a mentor or have simply fallen into the role. Whichever the case, it is important that you be open to the task. You must recognize that you are an example. What you do will be as important, or more so, than what you say.

Mentoring can become natural to you and can fit into your schedule without being a time-killer. You do not

have to take an afternoon a week to meet with someone to perform your duty as "mentor." You can mentor as you visit, as you answer questions, as you volunteer to help with small tasks. You are mentoring as you are being observed in your own teaching world. Does the teacher you are mentoring see you planning ahead? Does he or she observe your positive interaction with students and your cooperation with administrators? Are you open with your own mistakes, your own vulnerabilities? Do you demonstrate a method in your handling of paperwork? None of us is going to be 100% in all areas, but each of us has areas of strength that can help a novice teacher get a better handle on a fresh year of teaching.

Allowing the "new teacher" to observe you opens the door for opportunities for your protégé to learn. Riley (2001) wrote in a profile of retiring principal Charles Nickel, an educator for 35 years, that he is "revered as a 'dean' among fellow principals. Educators treasure his fair and tireless advocacy on their behalf." Nickel remembered the example of his mentor, Curtis Wilkerson. He was "impressed with the way Wilkerson constantly jotted lists in a small notebook and touched base with each teacher during the first hour of the school day." Soon Nickel began to "fill his shirt pocket with 3-by-5-inch index cards about things to do and people to call." The process cycles and self-propagates: Nickel transitioned from one being mentored to one others esteem and emulate.

Many opportunities will occur that will provide opportunities for you to be observed in your role as a

mentor. Having group conferences, for example, is an excellent way to communicate with parents. Teachers of the same student can gather at one time with the parents of the student. This can be as beneficial for the parent as it is for the teachers in that time is saved and different perspectives of the student's work can be given. If there are problem areas discussed, having several people brainstorm for ideas may be a practical way of coming up with solutions. In a situation such as this, a novice teacher can observe effective ways of communication with parents in a conference situation.

How to begin a conference is important, but it is a frightening thing if one has never done it before. Sitting in with an experienced teacher as he or she initiates the conference is very helpful. Listening appropriately, asking specific questions, showing support for a grade given — all of these are things that can be learned through observation in an actual conference setting. Recognize that you are being observed. Be deliberate in your own comments and questions with the parent. Allow the parent and the novice teacher to see that your concern is for their child and your student. New teachers, as well as parents, need to know that you care about the child. If you can help new teachers understand that concept, they will see that the entire conference will go more smoothly.

School administrators sometimes provide opportunities for novice teachers to observe other teachers in the classroom. This gives them an opportunity to see in action what it is that they cannot learn from reading or discussion. Be open to allowing yourself to be observed

while teaching. It will be a positive experience for the teacher you are mentoring.

Communicating with parents is a big part of a teacher's responsibility. Allow the teacher you are mentoring to observe you as you call parents and write notes or information sheets to send home. Provide samples of introductory letters or classroom policy sheets you have written to parents. If a situation has occurred in which a parent needs to be notified, or if a parent has sent word for you to call, there is only one thing a professional will do: Call. Rather than discuss it in the teacher workroom, do it. Let the novice teacher see you following through with parents. It will make an impact.

The teacher you are mentoring also should observe you as you use your own strategy for keeping up with paperwork. If you have come up with a method that reduces the amount of grading or recording, share it with the novice teacher. Let him or her observe you as you use your time wisely during your planning or conference period. Wasting time is poor management, but it is something many teachers are in the habit of doing. As a role model, allow the novice teacher to see you use your organizational skills. Show examples of how you organize your grade book, discipline records, etc.

Practice what you preach. If you advise the teachers you mentor not to talk negatively about students, you should not be doing that yourself.

Your response to situations is critical as you are being observed. How you react when an administrator gives you a directive will speak volumes about the kind of teacher you are. Responses to students, other teachers,

and parents are all key to your effectiveness as a teacher. You often will be in such situations as hall duty, in meetings, and in the lunchroom, where others will observe your reactions and responses.

A Mentor Leads Through Guidance

A good guide not only directs, but also leads the way, slowly enough that the follower can step along with him or her. Times will occur when you will find it necessary to actually do a task with the teacher you're mentoring so that he or she not only can observe it, but also do it along with you. You are a guide. A good mentor will make it a point to be available to help the new teacher.

Why is it so easy for us to help young children, but when our teacher friends are in their infancy in a new occupation (new school, new program) we expect them to have all the answers. Answers? Most of us didn't even know all the questions our first years in the classroom. We had no idea what to ask.

The old adage, "Experience is the best teacher," is true. Making mistakes and learning from them has its place in teaching. But there will be plenty of that without planning for it. There also is a place for someone to show us how it is done.

Some ways in which a good mentor guides teachers include:

- Advise them on decisions they must make regarding such things as graduate work or publishing requirements (college level).
- Guide them toward opportunities in professional development, such as workshops or seminars.

- Help them understand methods of classroom management. Show them different ways of dealing with situations and ways to prevent discipline problems before they occur.
- Help them keep up their requirements for updating certification.
- Help them deal with isolation as they become acclimated to the school community. There are many ways of doing this, such as sitting with them at faculty meetings, joining them at lunch, or introducing them to the school community.

A teacher tells of beginning a teaching position in a small, rural community as an outsider. She remembers walking through the workroom full of teachers and not one teacher acknowledging her presence. It was a lonely, difficult time and took many months for her to begin to feel accepted. A mentor can be a part of making acclimation a much more comfortable process.

Time management seems to be a problem for many teachers. Guide the teachers you mentor toward ways of managing time effectively. Share hints that you have learned that have made your life easier.

A Mentor Leads Through Communication

Strong communication is vital in the mentoring process. In a sense, you are selling yourself to the teachers you mentor. They must learn to trust you if you are to be successful in your relationship. Communicate often, and make it effective. Be quick to listen. Be slow to judge. Be eager to share. You not only are providing

advice and wisdom, you also are providing moral support.

One teacher tells of beginning a new job teaching middle school in October of the year. The students were quite proud of the fact that they had "run off" a number of teachers and as many substitutes. This teacher, they were sure, would be next in line. The year was difficult, excruciatingly difficult; but this teacher was determined that if these students learned anything that year, it was that she was there to do a job and she would be back the following day. A veteran teacher in the school took it upon herself to take this struggling teacher under her wing. She used words to encourage. She spoke of ideas that might help. She smiled, cried, and glared with empathy. She wrapped her arms of wisdom around her protégé and helped her to stick it out. That year of survival turned into many of success. Communication from a mentor was part of that success.

Communication is key in the mentoring relationship. The teacher you mentor should feel free to ask you questions and not made to feel like an idiot for doing so. Dropping by the classroom for an informal visit, either before or after school, will give an opportunity for communication.

All schools have unwritten rules or expectations that will be foreign to the new teacher. Discussing these early on can prevent many problems. Communicate such information as activities that usually occur during the year, professional development opportunities, and the district's policies.

Notes of encouragement are forms of communication that can be just as effective as the verbal word. New teachers are no different than the rest of us. We all like to be patted on the back. Positive reinforcement is a great motivator. Catch the teachers you are working with doing something right, and be quick to let them know about it. They need to know when they are on the right track.

We communicate volumes through body language. If the teacher you are mentoring notices that you are looking beyond him while he is speaking to you, he will sense your disinterest. Yawning, looking at your watch, and facial expressions all speak as clearly as words. Negative communication has as much of an effect as does positive communication.

Too often we neglect one of the most important facets of communication, listening. Your job as a mentor is to listen — often "between the lines" — to what the teachers with whom you are working are telling you. They will communicate information to you, but perhaps not as clearly as you would like. You must make an effort to truly listen with your eyes and your ears to what the teachers are trying to say. Do not assume you understand the message you are being told. Ask questions or repeat to clarify what you think you are hearing.

It is not always necessary for you to respond. At times, new teachers will answer their own questions by hearing their own talk. The teachers we are mentoring need us to listen for two reasons: they need a sounding board or they need input from us. When they do need input, make your feedback as constructive as possible.

A Mentor Supports by Being an Advocate

Times arise during a teaching year when new teachers may need someone to stand *with* them or even *for* them. The mentor often will be the one who fills this role of advocate.

You are an advocate for your protégé when you speak up on his or her behalf. Misunderstandings often occur among faculty or parents. If you hear something being said that you know is not true, step in and speak up on behalf of the teacher being mentored. This may go a long way toward preventing unnecessary problems and creating unity in the school.

You may be a part of providing opportunities for the teacher you are mentoring by keeping your eyes and ears open. For example, if you know that your protégé is interested in grant writing, and an administrator mentions to you the need for a grant in a particular area, you might mention to the administrator that this person is capable of writing the grant and may be interested in doing so.

Another good way to serve as an advocate for the teachers you are mentoring is to call others' attention to their accomplishments. For example, if the new teacher you are mentoring has had his or her picture in the paper for some reason, make a copy and post it in the faculty workroom.

Other Attributes of a Mentor

Interviews with people who have had the opportunity to learn from a mentor have indicated that there are common characteristics they like to see in a mentor.

- Authenticity: "Good mentors are 'for real.' They mean what they say and say what they mean; they practice what they preach."
- Gentleness: "Good mentors can show me the error of my ways without making me feel like a complete failure. They are gentle with my self-concept."
- Patience: "Good mentors won't give up on me; they will understand that I'll have bad days but will be back to help me be the teacher I know I can be."
- Consistency: "Good mentors don't say one thing to me and something else to someone else."
- Positive attitude: "Good mentors can look at something and see the good in it, not always seeing the glass as half empty."
- Teachable: "Good mentors recognize that they themselves have much to learn and are eager to grow in their own knowledge."
- Enthusiasm: "Good mentors are excited about where they are and what they are doing. They don't dread coming to school or fulfilling job responsibilities."

Developing a Mentoring Plan

Many states now require schools to have a mentoring plan in place to help new teachers become acclimated to the school and to teaching. A mentoring plan generally explains the process by which mentors will be assigned and how the plan will be implemented, and it includes checklists for mentors to follow to ensure they cover everything that new faculty need to know.

A good way to begin developing a mentoring plan is to invite interested faculty members to participate in a mentoring committee. It is helpful for an administrator to serve on the committee. After electing a chair, the committee can make a list of the specific needs of their school and the goals for their mentoring program. Once the goals are established, the committee can begin the work of developing procedures for implementing the plan. Several questions need to be discussed.

- How should mentors be assigned?
- Must mentors volunteer, or can any teacher be asked to mentor?
- What teachers will be assigned a mentor? Only new teachers? Second- and third-year teachers? All non-tenured faculty?

- How will mentors be trained?
- What types of things need to be included on a checklist?
- Will there be a means of accountability for mentors, such as writing in the dates when material has been covered with the person being mentored and signing the checklist?
- Will a faculty member be in charge of the mentoring plan, or will an administrator be in charge of assigning mentors?
- Will there be group mentoring situations, such as special meetings for new faculty members?

These types of questions can guide the discussions of a mentoring committee. After writing a draft of the mentoring plan, it is helpful to give a copy of the draft to all faculty, both tenured and non-tenured, and ask for feedback. Often the best ideas to strengthen the plan can come from new faculty because they know the types of mentoring they need.

When developing a mentoring plan, it is beneficial to look at mentoring plans developed by other schools. If you know of other schools who already have mentoring plans in place, ask them if you can look at their plans to get ideas for developing your own.

Following are two examples of mentoring plans, one from a public school and one from a university. While these mentoring plans have been designed to fit the needs of each respective school, they are plans that could be adapted for any school district. The Miller R-II School District in Miller, Missouri, and the School of Teacher

Education at Southwest Missouri State University were happy to share their plans.

Sample Public School Mentoring Plan

The 1985 Missouri Excellence in Education Act requires each school district to establish professional development programs for beginning teachers. This "beginning teacher support system" must include an entry-year mentor program.

The Professional Development Committee of the Miller R-II School District in Miller, Missouri, created a mentoring handbook to help create a program that provides meaningful assistance and encouragement for the beginning teachers in that school district. A portion of that handbook follows.

Goals

Through effective training, meaningful guidelines, and careful selection and matching of the mentor teacher and the beginning teacher, the following mentor program goals will be achieved:

- To provide a network of support, guidance, and feedback for beginning teachers in their entry-year from a veteran teacher.
- To provide training for mentors which will equip them for the role of mentoring as well as refine their own instructional skills.
- To provide assistance for beginning teachers in their development of classroom skills.
- To provide for the opportunity for professional growth of both the new and experienced teacher.

- To provide professional and personal benefits to experienced teachers who assist new teachers.
- To provide a vehicle to assess the effectiveness of the mentoring program to ensure its continued success.

Choosing/Selecting Mentor Teachers

The selection of mentor teachers should follow a careful process. The literature recommends that mentors be matched to new teachers by both building (physical location) and teaching assignment. Locating mentors and new teachers in the same building allows for both formal and informal communication. When possible, the mentor should be teaching the grade level (in the elementary school) or the subject area (in the secondary school) of the new teacher.

Each building principal is encouraged to poll his or her staff to find candidates interested in serving as mentors who are willing to follow the guidelines for the mentor program. Principals should not feel limited to having to choose teachers who volunteer. In turn, teachers should be free to turn down the nomination to be a mentor teacher. When choosing a mentor teacher, the principal should consider if the teacher has the qualities defined and has the time to devote to mentoring the new teacher.

A mentor should be assigned as soon as possible after a new teacher is hired, either at the beginning or during the school year. This allows the new teacher and the mentor to get to know each other personally before the "pressure" of the beginning of school or allows a new teacher hired during the year immediate support from a mentor teacher.

The following are some of the criteria that should be considered when selecting mentors:

- It is important that mentors be well versed in district policy and procedures.

- Mentors should be credentialed teachers with permanent status in the district.
- Mentors should have recent substantial experience in classroom instruction.
- Mentors should have demonstrated exemplary teaching ability as indicated by effective communication skills, subject-matter knowledge, and mastery of a range of teaching strategies necessary to meet the needs of pupils in different contexts.
- Mentors should be interested in guiding a new teacher and be able to communicate and respond to a new teacher's needs.
- Mentors should be aware of peer coaching techniques or should have participated in peer coaching workshops.

Training

One of the most important parts of the mentor program is a training program for those who serve as mentors. Mentor training workshops will address:

- Discussion of the responsibilities and characteristics of a mentor
- Confidentiality in the mentor relationship
- Listening skills
- Building trust
- Interpersonal skills for working with adults
- A review of effective design
- Peer coaching techniques

Teachers who are interested in being a mentor are encouraged to attend training workshops even though mentor positions are not currently available in their building.

Participation in a mentor-training workshop will not meet one of the mentor program goals, but will facilitate the men-

tor's ability to complete the task of helping a beginning teacher experience a successful year.

Facilitating the Mentor Program

Release time will be provided for the mentor and new teacher to be used for observations.

A principal's involvement in the mentor program is the cornerstone for its success. The following are but a few ways a principal can encourage teachers to participate in the mentor program and insure its success:

- Encourage interested teachers to attend mentor training and/or staff development workshops before mentor positions become available in the building.
- Survey the building teachers and maintain a current list of qualified and available mentor candidates.
- Provide periodic release time for the mentor or new teacher so he or she can observe in the other's classroom.
- Visit with the mentor to monitor the progress and success of the mentoring efforts.

Beginning of the School Year Checklist

Use this checklist to identify procedures you follow in your classroom. Put a check mark in the space to the left of each item for which you do have a set procedure. Place an asterisk next to those items you do not have procedures for but feel you should. Circle items you feel should be taught on the first day of school.

I. Beginning Class

_____ Roll call, absentees
_____ Tardy students
_____ Academic warm-ups or getting-ready routines
_____ Distributing materials
_____ Behavior during class opening (elementary)

II. Room/School Areas

_____ Shared materials
_____ Teacher's desk
_____ Water fountain, bathroom, pencil sharpener
_____ Student storage/lockers
_____ Student desks (elementary)
_____ Learning centers, stations (elementary)
_____ Playground (elementary)
_____ Lunchroom (elementary)

III. Setting Up Independent Work

_____ Defining working alone
_____ Identifying problems
_____ Identifying resources
_____ Identifying solutions
_____ Scheduling
_____ Interim checkpoints

IV. Instructional Activities

_____Teacher/student contacts
_____ Student movement in the room
_____ Signals for students' attention
_____ Signals for teacher's attention
_____ Student talk during seatwork
_____ Activities to do when work is completed
_____ Student participation
_____ Laboratory procedures
_____ Student movement in and out of small groups
_____ Bringing materials to group (elementary)
_____ Expected behaviors in group
_____ Expected behavior of students not in group

V. Ending Class

_____ Putting away supplies, equipment
_____ Cleaning up

_____ Organizing materials
_____ Dismissing class

VI. Interruptions
_____ Rules
_____ Talk among students
_____ Conduct during interruptions or delays
_____ Passing out books, supplies
_____ Turning in work
_____ Handing back assignments
_____ Getting back assignments
_____ Out-of-seat policies

VII. Work Requirements
_____ Heading papers
_____ Use of pen or pencil
_____ Writing on back of paper
_____ Neatness, legibility
_____ Incomplete work
_____ Work missed
_____ Work due dates
_____ Make-up work
_____ Supplies
_____ Coloring or drawing on paper (elementary)
_____ Use of manuscript or cursive (elementary)

VIII. Communicating Assignments
_____ Posting assignments
_____ Orally giving assignments
_____ Provision for absentees
_____ Requirements for long-term assignments
_____ Returning assignments
_____ Homework assignments

IX. Monitoring Student Work
_____ In-class oral participation
_____ Completion of in-class assignments

_____ Completion of homework
_____ Completion of stages of long-term assignments
_____ Monitoring all students

X. Checking Assignments in Class
_____Students exchanging papers
_____ Marking and grading assignments
_____ Turning in assignments
_____ Students correcting errors

XI. Grading Procedures
_____ Determining report card grades
_____ Recording grades
_____ Grading stages of long-term assignments
_____ Extra credit work
_____ Keeping records of papers/grades/assignments
_____ Grading criteria
_____ Contracting with students for grades

XII. Academic Feedback
_____ Rewards and incentives
_____ Posting student work
_____ Communicating with parents
_____ Written comments on assignments

XIII. Other Procedures
_____ Fire drills
_____ Lunch procedures
_____ Student helpers
_____ Safety procedures

The Miller School District Mentoring Plan goes on to include definitions of a mentor, a professional development plan (including the headings: goals, strategies, facilitated by, review date, and date achieved), and a "mentor/mentee" log for each quarter of the year. The log is a checklist with a place for the teachers to write

in the date when the material was covered. Both the mentor and the teacher being mentored sign and date the form under the line that reads, "Signatures verify that we have accomplished the activities checked off above." The mentoring plan also includes a copy of the district's "Summative Evaluation Report."

Sample University Mentoring Plan

Faculty in the School of Teacher Education at Southwest Missouri State University designed a mentoring plan to "encourage faculty members with the intention of positive enculturation and the strengthening of our community of learners." A portion of that plan follows.

Mentor Coordinator

A faculty member in the School of Teacher Education will be assigned as the mentor coordinator to implement the mentoring plan. The coordinator will work with the department head to assign mentors, keep a current list of all nontenured faculty members and their mentors, and plan three symposiums throughout the academic year. The coordinator will serve a minimum of two years to insure continuity.

Mentors

At the beginning of each fall semester, all interested faculty members in the School of Teacher Education who have four or more years of service to the department may be asked to serve as a mentor. Mentors will attend symposiums and will counsel the faculty members they are mentoring on professional topics. Mentors will be assigned within the first two weeks of the semester.

Faculty to Be Mentored

All nontenured School of Teacher Education faculty will be assigned a mentor and will be included in the mentoring symposiums. Any tenured faculty member who is assigned new teaching responsibilities may also work with a mentor.

Assigning Mentors

At the beginning of each fall semester, the mentor coordinator will visit individually with faculty to be mentored about the process of assigning mentors. The new faculty member will be asked if anyone has already been helping them whom they view as a potential mentor. If a person or two are named, the mentor coordinator will go to the first tenured faculty member and ask if he or she would be willing to serve as a mentor for that person. If the first person is not able to serve as mentor for some reason, the second person will be asked. The mentor coordinator will make a list of nontenured faculty members and the possible mentors and will discuss the list with the department head. Depending on the situation, a mentor may be someone within the faculty member's program area or someone outside of the program. The mentor assignments are flexible and may be changed if necessary.

Symposiums

The mentor coordinator, in consultation with the department head, will hold a series of three symposiums for the faculty to be mentored. Each symposium will have specific topics to be discussed, such as reappointment, tenure, and promotion guidelines; preparation of reappointment notebooks; university and college awards; or the expectations for teaching, research, and service. All faculty being mentored and all mentors will attend symposiums. All other School of Teacher Education faculty are invited and encouraged to attend to provide input.

Suggestions for Mentors

____ Schedule a meeting with the faculty member you will be mentoring.

____ Get acquainted with the new faculty members you will be mentoring. Let them know a little bit about your background.

____ Let them tell you about their background and their goals.

____ Introduce them to the campus. Perhaps take them on a walking tour around campus, pointing out the library, student union, bookstore, administration building, etc.

____ Ask them if they need information about taking care of such items as getting their parking permit, faculty identification card, key requests, or any paperwork for Human Resources. If necessary, accompany them to help expedite these tasks if they have run into problems.

____ Consider suggesting that they purchase a university date book to keep track of university timelines and to keep track of meetings and other commitments. Help them identify deadlines critical to courses, such as drop/add deadlines. Help them determine mid-term and final exam periods.

____ Introduce them to other faculty members and staff, especially those with whom they will be working closely. Invite them to sit with you at beginning of school faculty meetings or activities.

____ Provide faculty members you are mentoring with your phone numbers and email addresses, as well as the best times to reach you.

____ When you first begin a mentoring relationship, you might set aside an hour or so to answer questions and discuss pertinent information. At this time discuss such items as university policies, grading, preparing syllabi, faculty responsibilities, or setting office hours.

____ For the first couple of months, you might want to set up a time to meet regularly or as needed so that the new faculty member will find you accessible during the time when they have numerous questions.

____ When the new faculty members have had a month or two to become acclimated to their new positions, set aside a time to sit down with them to review the university's or department's guidelines for reappointment, tenure, and promotion.

____ Explain the procedures to the new faculty member for applying to the Professional Education Unit (PEU), including complying with the required professional development five-year plan.

____ Help the faculty members you are mentoring become aware of existing professional development opportunities, such as grant workshops, faculty showcases, or technology workshops.

____ Ask the faculty members you are mentoring if they have any concerns or questions about any aspect of teaching, research, or service. Let them talk about their agendas in each of these areas and guide them according to the expectations of your department and university.

____ Stay in contact with the faculty you are mentoring to provide feedback and encouragement about the activities they have completed that lead toward promotion and tenure.

____ Know the basic research agendas of the faculty members you are mentoring and look for ways to help them. For example, if you know a faculty member you are mentoring is working on a research project involving multicultural education and you read about a call for manuscripts in a journal on the topic, make a copy of it and give it to him or her.

____ If the faculty member you are mentoring is new to the world of writing and publishing, think of a project you could do together so that he or she can learn the process from you. Or talk to him or her about projects or special interests and provide suggestions for how to turn those into articles. Talk about the peer-refereed process and help find journals in the field that are peer-refereed.

____ Be available to the faculty members you are mentoring to proofread manuscripts or serve as a sounding board to help them in their thinking as they write. Sometimes new writers just need the confidence that they are going in the right direction. Remember how you felt when you were first learning to write for publication and remember what kind of help you needed most.

____ Steer the faculty members you are mentoring toward committees you think they would find interesting and that would help them in their study and interest. Be sure they are serving on both departmental and university committees, but not too many so they don't become overburdened, thus preventing them from having time to write.

____ One of the greatest gifts you can give to the faculty members you mentor is to assist them with time management and help them decide which activities to get involved in. Help them set their own priorities so they don't take on too much too soon and get overwhelmed, as can happen so easily.

____ Look for ways to encourage and support the faculty members in order to help them balance teaching, service, and research.

____ Submit the names of the faculty members you are mentoring for recognition for their accomplishments on and

beyond campus, such as the university or college awards, campus newsletters, local, state, and national organizations, local newspaper, etc.

____ Encourage faculty members you are mentoring to apply for grants, awards, or other forms of recognition or participation that fit with their research, teaching, and service agendas.

____ Schedule casual meetings, such as lunch, with other mentors and the faculty members they are mentoring to help them develop a community of learners.

____ If the faculty members you are mentoring are interested in writing grants, either help them find grant sources or lead them to another faculty member who might specialize in grant writing.

What New Teachers Need

One good way to find out what new faculty members need most from a mentor is to talk to teachers who have recently completed one year of teaching. Following is a discussion from two new teachers, one from the public schools and one from a university setting. Their perspectives can offer mentors invaluable insight into the process of mentoring.

Mentors Are Life-Savers for New Teachers

Jenny Companik, first-year teacher

I went to my mentor with questions about everything from how the school runs to how I could teach something in my classroom. When the school year started, I found myself using a lot of the activities that my mentor was using because I was so overwhelmed. As the year proceeded, I came up with my own ideas and bounced them off of her. Even if she wasn't sure about the idea and how it would work, she was supportive and encouraged me to try my ideas. I think that you need to realize that it is good to get ideas from your mentor, but sometimes what works for them doesn't work for you. Don't be afraid to try what

you want to or ask another teacher if she has an idea you could use.

Not only did my mentor help with curriculum questions or classroom questions, but she also made sure that she included me when she did things with other teachers. She made sure to introduce me to everyone in the school. This is something that is really important because I was worrying about getting the year started and not bothering others as they were doing the same, so I would not have met everyone as quickly without her help.

There is a lot of paperwork involved in your first year of teaching. My mentor was good about checking with me to see how it was coming along throughout the year, so that I didn't have to rush at the end of the year to get everything done. The end of the year, just like the beginning of the year, involves technicalities as well.

Although they are not your official mentors, the other teachers in the building can be a wealth of information and help. Everyone has been where you are and will gladly help. If you need supplies for a topic you need to teach, ask, because chances are people will come pouring in with "stuff" for you to use. I found that there were teachers whose philosophies were like mine, so I would tend to go to them when I needed help. I spent a lot of time with the teacher with whom I had recess duty, so she provided me with great ideas. Not only that, but she would listen to an idea that I had tried and provide me with suggestions as to how I might change it so that it would work better. Other teachers are a great help, so just ask.

I was also fortunate enough to have another first-year teacher at my grade level. She was my saving grace throughout the year. There were times when I questioned my abilities and whether I was in the right profession. When I had days like this, I could go to her and completely open up with all of my insecurities and know that she was having the same feelings that I was. When you talk to experienced teachers, they tend to brush these insecurities aside and tell you, "Don't worry, everything will be okay." This is true, but easier said than done. I did worry and I had hard days, but I knew there was someone I could talk to and literally cry with about a stressful situation.

My principal also served as my mentor, in an unofficial capacity. She checked with me often about questions that I might have. Two things that I remember her telling me were don't be afraid to ask about anything and make a list of questions that you have when they come to mind. These were two great pieces of advice. I encourage you to make lists of questions, because they come to you when you can't ask them; and then when you can ask, you don't remember the question.

My first year of teaching was a success. This is due in large part to my mentor, the principal, and the other teachers in my building. They answered my questions, listened to my concerns, and helped in any way they could.

Effective Mentors Have a Holistic View

Brenda Bradshaw, new university faculty

I suppose when assigning mentors, it seems logical to assign a mentor who works closely with

the new teacher, such as a team teacher. However, in my experience, this has not necessarily been the case.

When I moved to the university teaching level, my first assigned mentor was one of the four professors on my elementary teaching team — the team leader. By my definition, she was the perfect person to observe my teaching and discuss instructional issues because we would be working closely together. However, I was surprised when she turned down the mentoring assignment. She explained by saying, "You will learn a lot from me anyway because we will be working together. You need a mentor who is outside of our team, so you can grow beyond the team."

When the department head selected another mentor for me, he chose someone who was in my area of study but not directly on my teaching team. He said that because she was tenured and published, she would be a good mentor for me. As I got to know her, I discovered other wonderful mentoring qualities. She is very encouraging and motivating. She listens to my ideas and concerns, which encourages and motivates me to generate more ideas and to cope with issues.

She is also flexible, yet focused and realistic. When we talk about ideas, she helps me find a "place" for the idea. For example, sometimes I will think of a big research and publishing project, and she will say that, while big projects are great, I also need to do a few shorter projects until after tenure.

She is also holistic in her perspective of my work. She not only views me as a teacher in need of ideas, she understands the reality of my need-

ing to be a researcher, to learn from other professors besides herself, and to get involved on campus and in the community. She also understands my need to balance work with my husband and two small children. I am serving on several committees and have applied for awards and research grants and have submitted numerous publications because of her tips and ideas. I have gotten involved in a campuswide teacher study group and a local teachers' organization on her recommendation.

I have grown tremendously as a teacher because of my past mentors. However, I have grown as an educator, researcher, community member, and working spouse and parent because of my current mentor. I feel more connected not only to my students, but also to the entire faculty, the campus, and community than I have in any other teaching position; and I know much of this is because of the influence and guidance of my mentor. When I reflect on the aspects of my work that are most satisfying, many of them were opportunities initiated by my mentor.

I can see my impact as a teacher educator in the context of the entire community, not just in the context of my classroom. I see my role as more significant and, hence, more rewarding and satisfying. I believe that an effective mentor can increase potential job satisfaction and career longevity for beginning teachers. I often wonder if I would have been happier in my previous positions had I felt more connected to the community beyond my classroom and had a mentor who knew how to attain the satisfaction I feel now.

Conclusion

Being a mentor for a new teacher can be an extremely rewarding experience. Mentors feel a strong sense of pride as they see the teachers with whom they are working blossom into the kind of teacher they had dreamed of becoming.

Most teachers enter their classrooms knowing what kind of teacher they want to be, but they need someone behind the scenes guiding and encouraging them and helping them think through issues and concerns. Hibert states that because of her mentor, she has "become more reflective and thoughtful about why I do what I do and how I go about doing it" (2000, p. 16).

Mentors not only help new teachers reflect on teaching practices, but they also set an example for professionalism in teaching. Routman contends that when mentors:

> behave with dignity and present ourselves — through our actions and appearance — as though teaching is the most important job in the world, we are sending the message to colleagues, students, and parents that we are proud of, and value, who we are and what we do. (2000, p. 4)

Mentoring is an important role, a role to be proud of.

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